

Ongaonga..

Central Hawke's Bay

The First Police House Map 15

An Officer was stationed here from 1909 to 1957. A small jail still stands in the backyard.

Former Headmasters Residence Map 16

In use 1890's- 1950's.

Across Herrick Street:

Coles House Map 17

George Coles built this distinctive house for himself in the late 1880's. A son of Coles founder, he became one of the three owners of Coles Bros. He was also an apiarist (beekeeper), and early equipment is still housed in the outbuildings.

Now think back in time:

Face the mountains. The view down Mill Street requires a little imagination. Instead of the modern school, picture a high gabled building of 1900. Opposite stood the Roman Catholic Church, St Francis (built 1908, sold 1979). Beyond this imagine the horse paddock with maybe 30 horses waiting for children to ride them home. Beyond this again stood the three storey flourmill, built 1879, closed 1914 after a very bad drought. Mount Vernon recorded 2½ inches of rain from July 1914 to March 1915.



To conclude the walk return to corner turn left

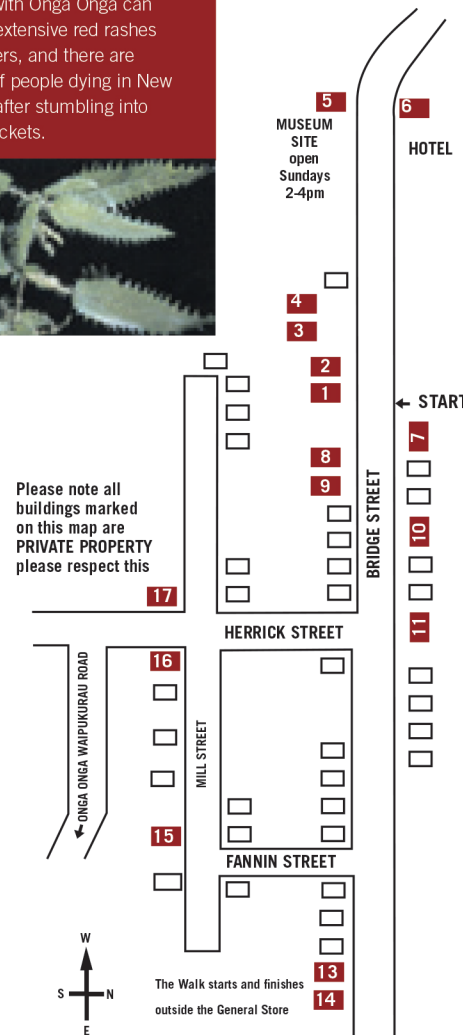
For museum visits, contact:

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Onga Onga, the nettle after which the town was named has a viscous sting transmitted by small hairs on the stem and leaves. Brushing against the plant is sufficient to create a stinging sensation that will last up to two days and extensive contact can be life threatening. Contact with Onga Onga can result in extensive red rashes and blisters, and there are records of people dying in New Zealand after stumbling into dense thickets.



Museum Complex

Buildings & Artifacts in this Museum are mostly original, a good selection of the way the village and district looked in the early days of its development.

Museum Opening hours:

Sunday 1pm to 4pm

Also other times by arrangement

Historic walk details inside...

Visits by arrangement: www.ongaongamuseum.org.nz

Origins Of Ongaonga

In the 1850's this district was dominated by four large runs, taking the easy country between the Tukituki and Waipawa rivers from the edge of the bush to Waipawa. The early stations were self-sufficient but as these blocks developed and smaller farms grew, a service centre was needed. Ongaonga was the natural site and the junction of four tracks, to Waipawa, Waipukurau, Tikokino and Takapau. Mr. J. Newman had built a store in 1869 and in 1879 a two storied hotel alongside the ford, which served these routes.

In 1872 Mr. HH Bridge laid out 78 sections from his Fairfield estate, auctioning off 51 sections and giving some for public amenities. The township flourished early this century, the village could boast 29 business premises. Coaches ran twice daily to Waipawa. The backcountry was alive with bush clearing, sawmills and farm development. A full range of social activities was available, typical of many colonial villages of this time. Motor transport heralded its decline, but we are fortunate to have retained enough of these early days to make this present village one of historic interest.



The Store Buildings Map 1 & 2

These elegant Edwardian buildings are all that remains of the once bustling commercial centre. Built by the local firm Coles around the turn of the century, the general store once boasted three separate premises, one to right was Bradley's Bookmakers, centre Coles Bros Builders Supplies, to the left Land Agents and then Gerant Tea-rooms and soft drinks.

For many years the gallery, was the General Store.

Cottages Map 3 & 4

Examples of early cottages in the village. The back one was built around 1878 for Mr. Drummond, an engineer. He also crafted violins and constructed the tote for the old racetrack. The Missionary W Colenso was a frequent visitor here and the local Historical Society holds copies of letters from Colenso to Drummond.

Sandford Arms Hotel Map 6

Opened in 1879. Burned down 1899 and again in 1953. History and photos are inside the hotel.



The Coles Factory Map 7

Edward Coles arrived from England with his wife and 13 children (later 15) in 1877. The Coles factory was built soon after, developing into a large firm that in its heyday employed 20 men. Many of the churches, schools and early houses of Central and Southern Hawke's Bay were built by this firm.

Post Office 1910- 1988 Map 8



To begin the walk, face Highway 50 and walk up Bridge Street two sections towards Ongaonga Motors to see

Bakery Site Map 9

At the left of this section, a lone chimney is all that remains of the village bakery and tuck shop. During the war years the red cross met here, rolling bandages and packing parcels.

St Oran's Presbyterian Church 1913 Map 10

Built with timber donated by Mr. Mc Leod of Woodside.

Village Hall 1900 Map 11

It started on the left, a single roomed building owned and administered locally. Early improvements met with fund raising dances, concerts, card evenings etc. Latest extension, the Play Centre. Running costs now covered by Council. It once housed the cinema, library and Plunket rooms. The hall is still well used.

Continue along Bridge Street passed Herrick Street.

The Church of the Good Shepherd 1902 Map 12

This church was gifted by Mr. Bridge to the people of Ongaonga. Once non- denominational then Anglican.

Presbyterian Home Mission Station 1910 Map 13

Gifted by Mr Walker, now a private home.



The War Memorial Map 14

The District was very loyal to the call in both wars. Casualties hit small towns hard. The Italian made soldier is unusual, he neither stands at ease nor at attention.

Detour down Fannin Street, right into Mill Street.
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